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LAWMAKERS CALL FOR CLOSER WATCH ON THE IMPACT OF MEDIA ON CHILDREN

*American young people spend an average of 6 ½ hours with media
each day*

Washington, D.C. – Young people today are spending an average of 6 and a half hours with media each day, yet very little is known about the effect of television on children's physical development, their cognitive development, or their moral values. Today four lawmakers: Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), the ranking member on the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet, Representative Melissa Hart (R-PA), Representative Joe Baca (D-CA), and Representative Harold Ford Jr. (D-TN) introduced the Children and Media Research Advancement Act (CAMRA Act) which would create a program dedicated to the study of children and the media within the Center for Disease Control. The CAMRA Act calls for research on the impact of all forms of electronic media, including television, movies, DVDs, interactive video games, cell phones, and the Internet on children's cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and behavioral development.

“The questions about how media affects the development of our children are clearly important, abundant, and complex. Unfortunately, the answers to these questions are in short supply. Such gaps in our knowledge base limit our ability to make informed decisions about media policy,” said **Rep. Markey**. “In order to ensure that we are doing our very best for our children, today we are introducing the CAMRA Act that will provide an overarching view of the impact of the media by establishing a program devoted to Children and Media within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.”

Currently, no federal research agency has responsibility for overseeing and setting a coherent media research agenda that can guide these policy decisions. Instead, Federal agencies fund media research in a piecemeal fashion, resulting in a patch work of findings.

Rep. Hart noted that the legislation will allow for a more complete picture of how all forms of media, not just television, are influencing our children. “The advent of new technologies, such as cell phones, video games and audio playback devices present new and wide-ranging challenges in understanding how different forms of media influence our children. This legislation will provide a more complete picture and allow us to draw from comprehensive research as we try to understand both the positive and negative impact media is having on our children.”

“I am concerned that our children are exposed to media that could harm their health and moral development. I fully support having CDC conduct research about the effect of new forms of media on our families and children,” said **Rep. Baca**, sponsor of the SAFE Rating Act (H.R. 1145) to protect children from violent and graphic video game content, and chair of the Congressional Sex and Violence in the Media Caucus.

"This funding will help us better understand the effects images of violence and sex have on the shaping of our children's development," said **Rep. Ford**. "The media, in all its forms, is a powerful and necessary force in our society. Passage of this legislation will be viewed as a victory for children, parents and the media."

This legislation has strong support among researchers and children's advocates including Children Now and Common Sense Media. Ted Lempert, President of Children Now, a national nonprofit organization which has for years has focused on the need for policymakers to keep pace with the rising influence of media on children, writes: *"CAMRA's establishment of a program on children and the media within the Center for Disease Control and Prevention will provide invaluable insight into the role and impact of electronic media on the children's development. Kids are spending more time with media than on any other activity except for sleeping, yet there are sizeable gaps in what we know about the role media play in children's cognitive, physical and behavioral development."*

Jim Steyer, founder and CEO of Common Sense Media, a leading non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting a healthy media environment for children, supports CAMRA, saying *"We enthusiastically endorse the funding of coherent research which will better illuminate the role of media in children's cognitive, social, emotional, physical and behavioral development. In an increasingly digital world where convergence of technologies provides entertainment, information and interactive possibilities to consumers, there are discernable knowledge gaps about the role of media on children's healthy development."*

Companion legislation has been introduced in the Senate by Senators Lieberman, Brownback, Clinton, Santorum and Durbin.

For more information on Representative Markey's work to preserve quality children's television, check out <http://www.house.gov/markey/>

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